

# TRUTH AND ASSUMPTIONS: Views on the Student Research Process

2016 Survey Findings\*\*

In an effort to better understand the state of information literacy in higher education, Credo Reference surveyed students and faculty on background research methods, research instruction, resource navigation, and what strategies most impact student grades.

## THE RESPONDENTS:



**1,104** FULL TIME STUDENTS

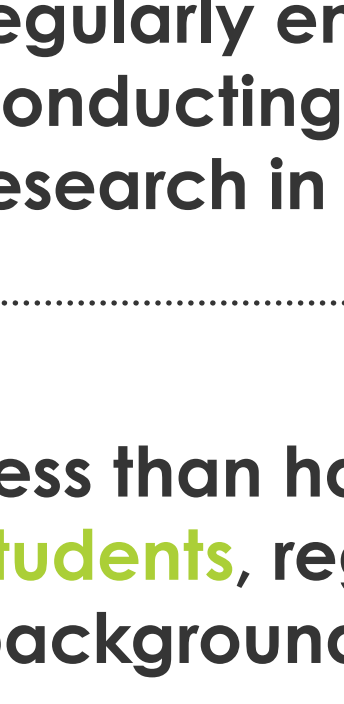
**28% OF RESPONDENTS ARE FRESHMEN**



**227** FULL TIME FACULTY

**60% OF RESPONDENTS HAVE TAUGHT FOR MORE THAN 10 YEARS**

## Are better grades earned with the help of background research?

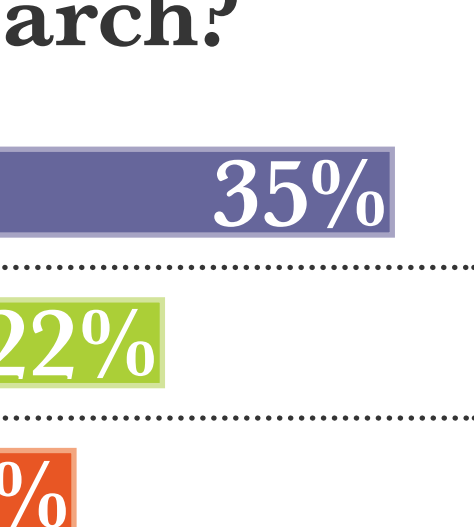


**83% of students** believe so.

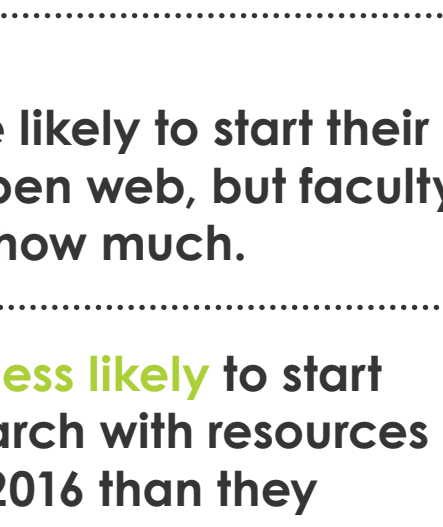
**87% of faculty** agree.

## Are students actually performing background research?

Only **61% of faculty** regularly encourage conducting background research in the classroom.



Less than half, **49% of students**, regularly perform background research.



## Where do students look for background research?

Google search **35%**

Research databases: (Credo, GVRL, Oxford, Other) **22%**

No background, straight to journals and primary sources **17%**

Print encyclopedias **9%**



**WIKIPEDIA**  
The Free Encyclopedia

Students are more likely to start their search with the open web, but faculty overestimate just how much.

Students are **13% less likely** to start background research with resources like Wikipedia in 2016 than they were in 2014.

## How do students describe scholarly resources?

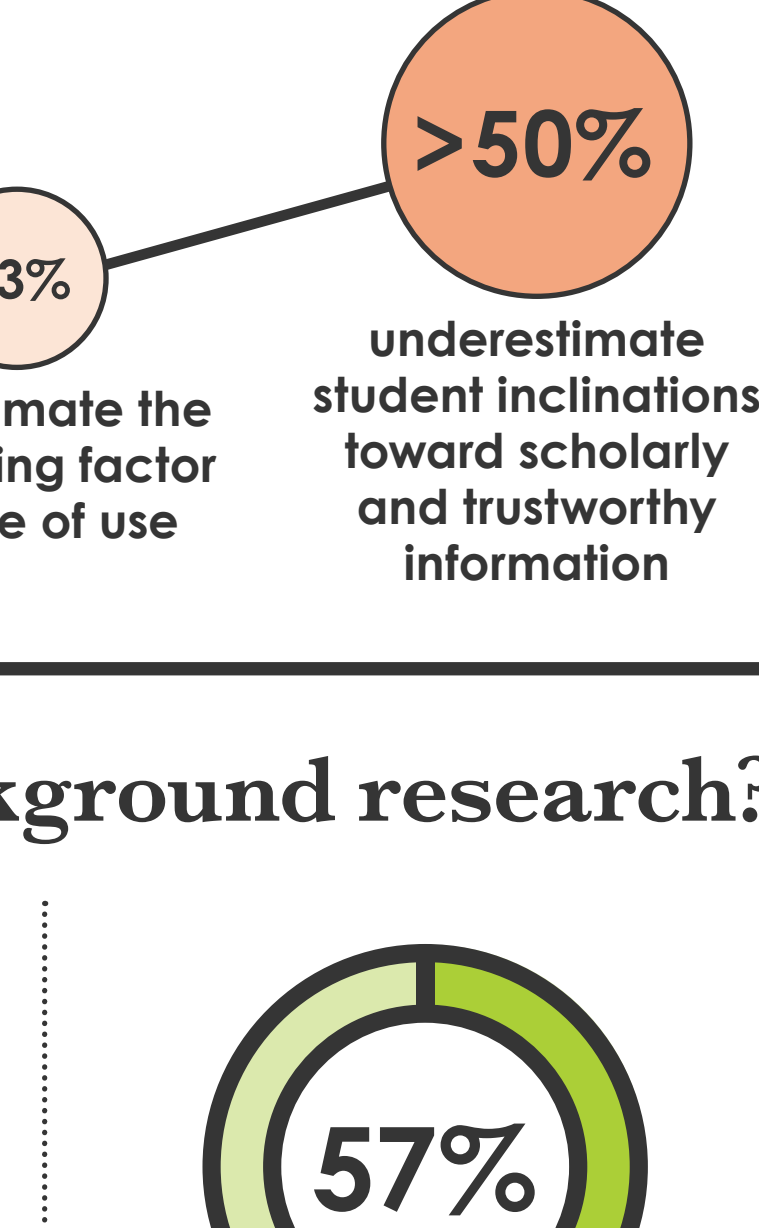
USEFUL

RELIABLE

TRUSTWORTHY

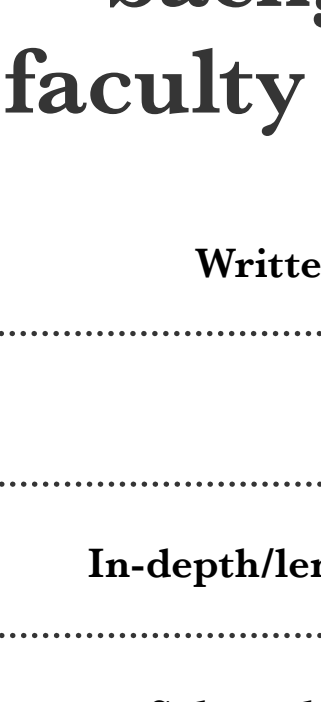
HELPFUL

When using library resources, **half of students** search **2-3 databases**.

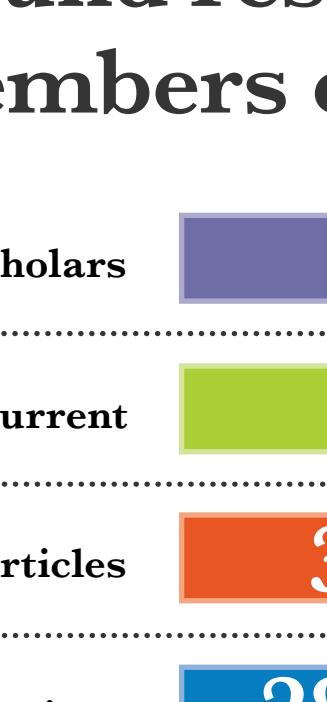


**19% of freshmen** don't use any library databases.

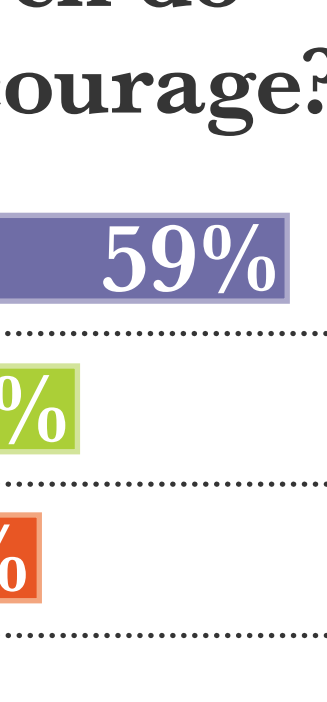
## What motivates students to choose their background information sources?



Convenience



Ease of access



Scholarly & trustworthy\*

\*Only 38% report this as a key motivating factor.

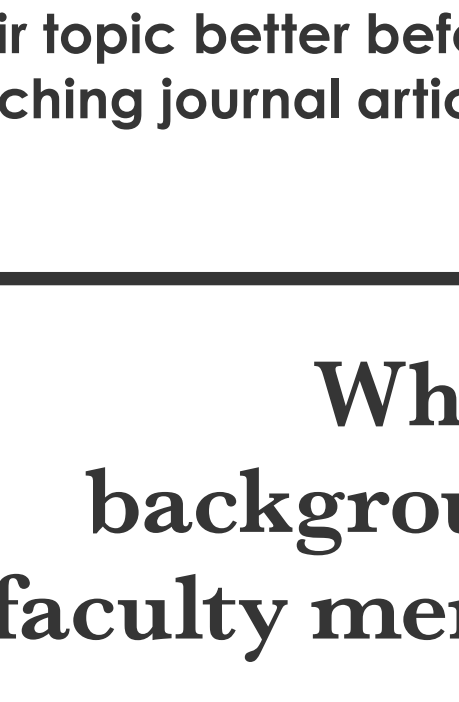
## And what is the faculty perception?

**27%** of faculty overestimate student desire for convenience

**13%** overestimate the motivating factor of ease of use

**>50%** underestimate student inclinations toward scholarly and trustworthy information

## The goal of background research?



**78%** say background research helps them understand their topic better before searching journal articles.



**57%** report that it helps them narrow their topic to a more manageable scope.

## What types of background research do faculty members encourage?

Written by scholars **59%**

Current **37%**

In-depth/lengthy articles **33%**

Selected by librarians **28%**

Written by the faculty of the school **13%**

## What factors motivate students to choose background research entries?

Keyword relevance **60%**

Publication date **40%**

Type of search result (biography, video, quotation, chronology) **33%**

Full-text **29%**

Good reviews **12%**

Number of words **7%**

**63% of students** report their instructors do not emphasize the importance of background information to support research.

## Are students being encouraged to be more information literate?

In 2016, **74% of students** said that they used their library's resources, which is a **51% increase** over 2014 reports.

Still, **34% of faculty** are not aware of formal instruction being offered in the library.

Less than **25% of students** are attending courses at their library to learn how to use resources for research, but **41% of faculty** believe students are receiving training.

**96% OF FACULTY & 98% OF STUDENTS** do not know that courses exist online to teach students how to use library resources.



\*\*Credo surveyed 1,104 students and 227 faculty members from colleges and universities around the world. Responses were collected between 10/12/16 and 11/28/16.